



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/806,885	03/22/2004	Takashi Izuta	P/1596-76	3872
2352 7590 03/20/2007 OSTROLENK FABER GERB & SOFFEN 1180 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS NEW YORK, NY 100368403			EXAMINER MOORE, KARLA A	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1763	
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE		MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE	
3 MONTHS		03/20/2007	PAPER	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/806,885

Applicant(s)

IZUTA, TAKASHI

Examiner

Karla Moore

Art Unit

1763

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 January 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 5-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 5-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 22 March 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 5-9 and 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP Patent No. 08-067413 to Mitsuyoshi et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,672,230 to Park et al. and Japanese Patent No. 10-247679A to Okuno et al.

3. Mitsuyoshi et al. disclose a substrate treating apparatus for performing a predetermined treatment of a plurality of substrates as immersed in a heated treated solution substantially as claimed and comprising: a substrate count acquiring device (9) for acquiring a count of said substrates to be treated and a treating tank device (4) for immersing said substrates in the heated treated solution for the processing.

4. However, Mitsuyoshi et al. fail to teach a controller comprising: storage device for storing beforehand a relationship between count of the substrates and processing time for immersion in the heated treating solution; or a processing time determining device for determining a processing time according to said substrate count of said substrates acquired by said substrate count acquiring device, by referencing to said relationship stored in said storage device; as well as the substrate count acquiring device.

5. Park et al. teach monitoring sensed processing variables during a treatment process and using a main computer/controller (i.e. to coordinate a substrate acquiring device, a storage device and processing time determining means) to display, store and process sensed data to thereby enable effective central management of the treatment process (abstract).

Art Unit: 1763

6. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the Applicant's invention was made to have provided a main computer acting as a storage device and processing time determining means in Mitsuyoshi et al. in order to display, store and process sensed data thereby enabling effective central management of a treatment process as taught by Park et al.

7. Examiner notes that the claimed invention teaches that the storage device and the process time determining means are part of a single controller/computer. .

8. Mitsuyoshi et al. and Park et al. fail explicitly teach the storage device for storing beforehand a relationship between said count of the substrates and a processing time such that a processing time for immersing said substrates in the heated treating solution is progressively extended as said count of said substrates increases, and such that a fixed processing time is assigned to a predetermined range of counts of said substrates

9. Okuno et al. teach providing a controller comprising a storage device comprising previously stored means for determining a processing time based on the number of wafers to be processed for the purpose of executing a processing treatment without deteriorating the qualities of substrates when the number of substrates processed in a single treatment may vary (abstract).

10. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the Applicant's invention was made to have provided a controller comprising a storage device comprising previously stored means for determining a processing time based on the number of wafers to be processed in Mitsuyoshi et al. and Park et al. in order to execute a processing treatment without deteriorating the qualities of substrates when the number of substrates processed in a single treatment may vary as taught by Okuno et al.

11. With respect to claims 6, the optical sensor of Mitsuyoshi et al. is a transmission type sensor.

12. With respect to claims 7 and 8, although Mitsuyoshi et al. do not explicitly teach using different types of sensors, one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that any sensor capable of sensing the presence of wafers could be used for counting the wafers. The courts have ruled that an express

Art Unit: 1763

suggestion to substitute one equivalent component or process for another is not necessary to render such substitution obvious. In re Fout, 675 F.2d 297, 213 USPQ 532 (CCPA 1982).

13. With respect to claim 9, Mitsuyoshi et al. further comprises a container rest (Figure 1, 2) for receiving a container (Figure 1, C) storing said substrates to be treated, said substrate count acquiring device counts said substrates in said container placed on said rest.

14. With respect to claim 12, Mitsuyoshi et al. disclose a substrate loading robot (10). Further, with respect to the recitation of the claim drawn to the placement of the counting device, the courts have ruled that the mere rearrangement of parts which does not modify the operation of a device is prima facie obvious. In re Japikse, 181 F.2d 1019, 86 USPQ 70 (CCPA 1950). In re Kuhle, 526 F.2d 553, 188 USPQ 7 (CCPA 1975).

15. With respect to claim 13, Park et al. teaches that data may be acquired from an external device (column 4, rows 15-18).

16. With respect to claim 14, the substrate count acquiring device in Park et al. is a computer which would be capable of acquiring key input from a control unit.

17. Claims 10-11 and 15-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mitsuyoshi et al., Park et al. and Okuno et al. as applied to claims 5-9 and 12-14 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,431,179 to Miyazaki et al.

18. Mitsuyoshi et al., Park et al. and Okuno et al. disclose the invention substantially as claimed and as described above.

19. However, Mitsuyoshi et al., Park et al. and Okuno et al. fail to teach shutters for opening and closing partition acting as an atmospheric barrier between said container rest and a treating tank.

20. Miyazaki et al. teach using shutters for preventing vapor from leaking outside a process apparatus (column 5, rows 28-40).

21. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the Applicant's invention to have provided shutters for opening and closing a partition acting as a barrier in said treating tank

Art Unit: 1763

device in Mitsuyoshi et al., Park et al. and Okuno et al. in order to prevent vapor from leaking outside the process apparatus as taught by Miyazaki et al.

22. Further, with respect to these claims, which recite placing the counting device at various places in the apparatus, the courts have ruled that the mere rearrangement of parts which does not modify the operation of a device is prima facie obvious. In re Japikse, 181 F.2d 1019, 86 USPQ 70 (CCPA 1950). In re Kuhle, 526 F.2d 553, 188 USPQ 7 (CCPA 1975).

23. With respect to claims 15-16, Miyazaki et al. provide a plurality of treatment sections sequentially arranged, for performing a series of treatment steps (column 3, rows 35-62). When one process is over the substrates can be transferred to the next. Further, the processing fluid in each of the sections can be drained and replaced as needed (column 3, rows 62-66).

Response to Arguments

24. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 5-16 and have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. Okuno et al. teach using previously stored means of a storage device to determine processing time based on the number of substrates to be processed.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Karla Moore whose telephone number is 571.272.1440. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9:00 am-6:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Parviz Hassanzadeh can be reached on 571.272.1435. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 1763

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Kara Moore
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1763
7 March 2007